

Community Newsletter

May 2022 Edition



Note from Mayor Meghan F. George



The safety of Lakewood continues to be among my highest priorities as mayor, and I am constantly working with our chiefs and directors to explore innovative ways to keep our city safe. That's why this past Monday, I presented Lakewood City Council with a set of recommendations to use federal dollars that our city received from the American Rescue Plan to fund two public safety initiatives.

Regarding our police force, after numerous discussions with Chief Kaucke, we are recommending that Lakewood increase our authorized number of officers by four, bringing our maximum capacity to 99. This increase is necessary to keep our staffing at key thresholds and not face a reduction in service as we deal with succession planning for known

and expected attrition from retirements as well as industry-wide challenges with recruiting high caliber talent to the field of police work. (Nationally, recruiting and hiring pools have sharply decreased and significant numbers of officers have left the field entirely). There is also a lengthy onboarding process required to bring in new officers – recruits or signees from other departments – and have them able to patrol solo (i.e., without a training partner).

By increasing our authorized number of police officers, Lakewood will take a strategic step that provides the financial ability and nimbleness to be proactive in recruiting, attracting, and keeping the City at its current number of uniformed officers. We also expect this to meaningfully reduce the need to use overtime in the police department, thus saving those dollars for other uses while helping with morale and retention for our current officers, who must work a significant number of overtime hours when our roster decreases.

In addition to increasing our maximum allowed capacity for officers, I am recommending that the City also enter into a contract with a vendor to staff our parks with ambassadors. I have heard from many of you that safety services beyond traditional uniformed officers' presence is a priority, and I share this view. I have a holistic view of safety that includes the importance of police, but an understanding that our approach cannot only be about officers. I have regularly met with leadership at City Hall to explore and evaluate innovative models that might achieve this goal. We think that the ambassador program could be a great nontraditional model that adds to Lakewood's safety.

Ambassador programs with elements of safety work have been implemented across the U.S. by cities, neighborhoods, and community groups, including at least a half dozen locally in Cuyahoga County. The model will use trained personnel to provide a stable, friendly, non-hostile role in our parks, interacting in a positive way with the public while also helping to identify and report potential safety issues before they arise or escalate. Ambassadors wear easily identifiable uniforms (ours will likely be purple and gold!) so they are a visible presence. They will work during warm weather months, primarily at Madison and Lakewood Parks, with additional presence rotating at our smaller parks. This will be a pilot program, and we will evaluate its effectiveness at year's end to determine any potential future engagement.

Lakewood is a safe community – you may have seen the news last month about positive trends in our city's crime data in the recently released Lakewood Police Department annual report. I am committed to keeping Lakewood safe – so while I am happy about those positive trends, we can never rest on our laurels. These proactive and strategic investments should help with our important safety goals.

Mayor Meghan F. George

Upcoming Events & Updates

Saturday, May 14- Keep Lakewood Beautiful Humus & Perennial Sale

Annual Keep Lakewood Beautiful Humus and Perennial Flower Sale, from 9:00 a.m. to noon at the parking lot of Old Stone House at Lakewood Park, 14532 Lake Avenue.

Saturday, June 4- Meet the Trucks

The City of Lakewood and the Lakewood Early Childhood PTA invite you to attend the Meet the Trucks on Saturday, June 4 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Lakewood Park, 14532 Lake Avenue. Come see, touch and explore the City's fine fleet of trucks and vehicles.

Calendar of
Events

City of Lakewood: Green Building Challenge Award Winner



The City of Lakewood is being recognized by Cleveland 2030 Districts/U.S. Green Building Council as part of their 2021 Green Building Challenge, the award for reducing transportation emissions, for its efforts in expanding the electric vehicle charging infrastructure over the last year.

Check out the full list of winners [here](#).

Keep Lakewood Beautiful Humus & Perennial Flower Sale

After a two-year absence, the annual Keep Lakewood Beautiful Humus and Perennial Flower Sale returns on Saturday, May 14th, from 9:00 am to noon at the parking lot of Old Stone House at Lakewood Park, 14532 Lake Avenue.

This annual event serves as a fundraiser for Keep Lakewood Beautiful, a volunteer-driven organization committed to community beautification in our city. Come get your bags of "black gold" for your gardens (humus = \$5/bag) and shop from a variety of perennial plants. Cash and checks only, please.

Keep Lakewood Beautiful Humus and Perennial Flower Sale

Saturday, May 14
9 am to noon

Old Stone House
parking lot
at Lakewood Park



Come get your bags of "Black Gold" for your gardens!
Humus - \$5/bag



Follow us on Facebook and
Instagram to learn more



Register Now for H2O's Summer Service Camp



H2O Summer Service Camp is an experience like no other! Campers are guided through each day by a counselor in a small group where they will experience a variety of service projects, including working at the Foodbank, growing food to donate, a clothing drive, supporting refugees, volunteering at the Cleveland Kids Book Bank...and more! The afternoons feature group activities, speakers, and circle time reflection. All of the experiences are tied together with a new theme each summer.

The camp fee is \$80.00. Financial assistance is available; we truly welcome all eligible campers regardless of their ability to pay.

Please contact Emmie Hutchison at (216)529-6045 or emmie.hutchison@lakewoodoh.net for a code to receive a discount. Registration is open to Lakewood residents who will be in 7th, 8th, or 9th grade in Fall 2022. Click [here](#) to register.

Lakewood City Council Seeks Applicants for Ward 4 Council Seat

Lakewood City Council is seeking applicants for the Ward 4 council seat soon to be vacated by Councilmember Daniel J. O'Malley. Councilmember O'Malley will resign his Ward 4 Council seat to accept an appointment on the Board of Directors of the Port of Cleveland. The candidate appointed to this position will serve the remainder of the term, which expires on December 31, 2023.

An applicant must be a registered voter of the city and a resident of the city for at least one year to qualify for consideration. Additionally, an applicant must be a resident of Ward 4 at the time of appointment.

Interested and qualified individuals may submit a cover letter and resume to the Clerk of Council at 12650 Detroit Road, Lakewood, OH 44107, or by email to council@lakewoodoh.net. Applications will be accepted until further notice.



Lakewood Fire Department Honor Guard Recognized

Congratulations to the Lakewood Fire Department Honor Guard for taking first place this year in the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Thanks to all the members of the Honor Guard for representing the City of Lakewood!



Building Department Staff Update



After seven years in the building department, Justin Maskaluk has accepted a newly created role: Commercial Property Maintenance Inspector.

Justin's primary focus is property maintenance for commercial structures that are four family structures and larger. He will also be an integral piece in enforcing the new parking garage/façade ordinance. In addition, Justin will assist with smaller residential building permits. Congratulations Justin on your new position!



We are Hiring!

The City of Lakewood is currently seeking applicants for the following opening:

Fleet Mechanic

For more information and to apply, please click [here](#).

Police Dispatchers Nominated for Gold Star Awards

Four Lakewood Police Department dispatchers were recently nominated for Ohio Gold Star Awards. The Ohio Gold Star Award Program publicly honors the outstanding individual achievements and contributions of the men and women who are the backbone of Ohio's 9-1-1 system.

Dispatchers Nikki Aquino and Dawn Florjancic were nominated for their work during a call of an injured worker that had been trapped in a trench last August on Thoreau Rd. They coordinated rescue efforts with Lakewood first responders, the Public Works Department, numerous other

fire departments, Kufner Towing, and Metro Life Flight in a successful effort to save the worker's life.

Dispatchers Tonya Graham and Christine Sykora were nominated for their handling of a call of the Marine Towers West collapsed parking garage in December. Tonya and Christine worked to coordinate efforts with Lakewood first responders as well as multiple fire and police departments

Congratulations and thank you for your hard work!



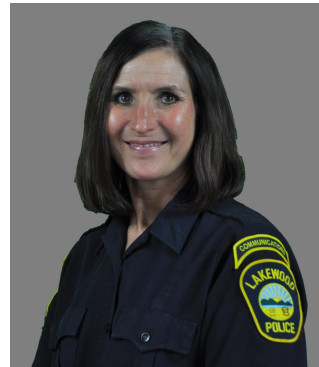
Nikki Aquino



Dawn Florjancic



Tonya Graham



Christine Sykora